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## THE WEEK IN THE KNESSET

By Gerdia Luft

AFTER two weeks of stormy debate which threatened its orderly work, the Knesset was back at ordinary business again last week. Despite the strong tension between government and opposition, and despite the fact that the first Knesset is going through its final phase, cohesion in the House is still surprisingly strong. There are always members who will forget impending elections once their interest in a favourite issue is aroused. Attendance, even if no vote is impending, is no worse than at other times, and the galleries are crowded even if no fireworks are expected.

The Knesset last week managed to cope with an agenda as varied as it was crowded. Votes were taken on the holy debated points of the detention of prisoners, and on the Budget question. There was the first reading of amendments in the conscription law, and of a bill for holidays with pay—regulations enabling the government to enforce economic controls had to be extended. Sandwiched between were questions by members and the appointment of the first Parliamentary Inquiry Commission into the treatment of Jerusalem detainees.

Two Decisions  
In addition to two issues which might easily have received hurried and unbalanced decisions, were both decided with care and common sense, much to the Knesset's credit. The decision to postpone the problem of whether the House can give orders to the government was inspired

by justified caution. The motion to endow the Knesset with rights which might change the whole governmental machine was not inspired by the needs of the community, nor by the wish to change the established relationship between legislature and executive, but merely by indignation against the use of the emergency regulations. This state of mind is not conducive to careful judgment. Constitutional issues of far-reaching importance should not be made under the pressure of the moment. Mr. Weizmann's surprise move to postpone the problem therefore came at an appropriate moment, especially as the present Knesset is in its final stage.

No Postponement  
The changes in the election law which were pushed through the House at the last moment to avoid postponing the date of the poll show the unusual conditions under which voting for the second Knesset will take place. To change over from geographical voting districts to an alphabetical voting list, as first glance appears to be a purely technical detail. But it is much more than that. We forget that this time voting for the Knesset will take place in circumstances completely different from three years ago. It is not only the doubling of the population, in itself a revolutionary change, which makes these elections and their careful preparation so important. The population which is housed in rapidly-expanding towns and districts which have as yet no street names and addresses,

makes the scheme of organizing the voters round polling booths of approximately a thousand each impossible. Anyone who has tried to track down a new immigrant in one of the new growing towns knows that we are far from the orderly system of streets and addresses usual in older cities.

### Alphabetical Lists

Therefore it was only logical that the proposed voting system should be supplanted, in certain cases, by alphabetical lists. It has been rightly argued that this should have been foreseen earlier, and the last-minute change avoided. The alphabetical system, however, has its drawbacks too, not only because voters, in many cases, will have a longer way to go to the polling station, but because names like Milrabi and Cohen are as common as Smith in England, and it will be difficult to compile satisfactory lists. Some loopholes may be open for gross irregularities but there appears to be no other way out of the impasse. Alphabetical lists will be used wherever necessary, and this will be decided by the Chairman of the Election Committee.

Some weeks ago, the Knesset decided to establish an appeal signed by all parties, asking the public to observe orderly procedure during the elections. This appeal has been drafted. The Knesset's decision that it is punishable by law to carry on election propaganda while filling out an application for an identity card

for another person, shows that these suspicions, a genuine concern for proper procedure. With a large percentage of the population going to the polls for the first time in their lives, careful preparation and the adherence of all parties to the obligations undertaken on time arrivals are traditional with SWISSAIR.

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Yours etc.,  
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## THE freedom of Jerusalem

will be formally conferred today upon David Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, in a decision taken by the Municipality of Jerusalem.

Earlier in December, 1949. Earlier in the same year, the same signal honour had been bestowed on Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the first President of the State. Following immediately on Mr. Ben Gurion's return from his American mission, today's action gives solemn recognition to the services rendered to the capital, services the full extent of which will only become known when the history of the siege, defence, and deliverance of Jerusalem is written. But the new Freeman's connection with the city did not begin with the War of Liberation. It began more than a generation ago in the modest offices of the Histadrut, and the connection became firm when, fifteen years ago, he became Chairman of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem and took charge of the defence arrangements.

In those years of the "State on the Way" Mr. Ben Gurion foresaw the vital need of preparing the nation for the day when it would have to take its stand in the struggle for independence. Crowded as those years were, the record of the last three years outweighs all that had gone before, and Jerusalem will forever be indebted to the man who turned the scales in the hour of deadly peril. At a time when bitter fighting had raged up throughout the country, when no man or rifle could be spared, Mr. Ben Gurion took the momentous decision to divert a sufficient number of men and arms to Jerusalem, and to break, in a supreme effort, the iron ring around the city. Likewise, during the diplomatic struggle before the forum of the United Nations he realized that the final decision on Jerusalem would fall in the hills of Judea. Out of his deep conviction that the independence of Israel was not complete without Jerusalem, he pressed for the transfer of the Government and the Knesset to the capital and it was due to this policy that the city, after a long period of stagnation, entered upon its revival, and is now expanding in every direction. It is a small but significant detail that he had kept the key to his old room in the Jewish Agency building, certain that one day he would return to it. Today, it will be recalled that a direct line leads back from his successful American tour to the "Ben-Gurion Conference" with American leaders at the King David Hotel, when he outlined his economic programme, in which Jerusalem itself is destined to be among the principal beneficiaries. When Mr. Ben Gurion is handed today the scroll making him an honorary citizen, he will accept it with that sense of humility that the hallowed name of Jerusalem commands. He may accept it also as a well deserved testimonial of gratitude.

THOSE of us for whom the deep abysses of hollow time reverberate as far back as the Twenties can probably conjure up a jaunty jazz voice singing "If I had a talking picture — of you-hoo!" Hollywood had improved on the universal practice of keeping mementoes in the form of pictures of the beloved. The would not prize open a locket and fondly gaze on an exquisitely-enamelled miniature when parted from his lover. He would set up a whirling instrument and project on to a screen a moving, speaking likeness of his love. If his rival caught him at it, of course there was the devil to pay, not with rapier, as in the time of Lothario, but with knuckle-dusters or baseball bats. So we, spectators of that superior wisdom which has built on islands of self-preservation, cannot understand why people carry in procession huge portraits of political personages. Such a love of display reminds us of the poet's "Love that is east in the breeze would cover its head, but makes no vain lamenting"; besides it only brings the heavy black eyes, and not even a political bore, but a common-sense disfigurement in an admirer.

## MUSICAL DIARY

EXCEPT for the concert given by the guest-conductor, Otto Klemperer, no musical event in 1961, so far, can be compared with Claudio Arrau's piano recital at the Edison on Thursday night. Mozart's Rondo in A minor, K. 511 at the beginning carried the audience beyond the everyday world, and the following sonata "Les Adieux" by Beethoven was given an inspired air. The second part of the programme offered the essence of piano music with Liszt's music unfortunately, though Mr. Arrau is world-famous as a Liszt interpreter. Schumann's masterpiece, the Fantasy in C major op. 17, received a spirited interpretation, full of poetry and romantic feeling. Chopin's Scherzo No. 4 in E major had a dream-like quality which developed in a grand crescendo. Since Rubinstein, we have not heard such authentic playing of Chopin. In Debussy's suite "Pour le piano," Mr. Arrau's touch in whole-tones scales had the sound of a harp. Ravel's "Jeux d'Eau" was sparkling and the seductive rhythm of the same master's "Alborada del Gracioso" was presented with an unrivalled charm.

Michael Taube  
Kol Israel's Tuesday night concert was overshadowed by the sad news of the death of Serge Koussevitzky. Nevertheless, the appearance of Michael Taube, as both pianist and guest conductor, made the concert a special event. He had complete control of the orchestra, and the solemn suite from Gluck's "Orpheus" which opened the concert was moving. Mr. Taube was in top form in the Mozart Piano Concerto in E Flat major, K. 271, in which he played the solo part while leading the orchestra at the same time.

The first performance of Benjamin Britten's "Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge" (Frank Bridge was his teacher) afforded an effective contrast to the classical work. It is a gay and there is unmistakable inspiration. The orchestra gave a vivid performance.

French Chamber Music  
A second concert of French Chamber Music was presented by the Centre de Culture Française at the Beit Hahalutzot on Wednesday. After an intelligent and sensitive address by Mr. J. Lowenson-Lavi, the pianist, so

nia Valine offered pieces by Dandrieu, Rameau and Couperin, and Francois Poulenc's striking transcription of Claude Gervaise. If these pieces had been played on the harpsichord, for which they were intended, they would have been most attractive. Performed on a piano, without any colour temperament, or differentiation, they were boring. Reading a score and playing the notes correctly, may satisfy the dry expert, but there is no art in producing notes without feeling. Decidedly more pleasing was the flute-player, Uri Shoham, who played Honegger's "Danse de la chevre" and Debussy's "Syrinx" without accompaniment. The young soloist was joined by Gideon Roehr (viola) and P. Blasberger (cello) in a good performance of Rouselet's not too original Trio.

FRANCO  
Bruckner and Freudenthal  
The 8th subscription concert of the I.P.O. at the Ohel Shalom Hall on Wednesday was conducted by Heinz Freudenthal, musical director of Radio Norrköping, in Sweden. Before the programme opened, the orchestra and audience rose to their feet for one minute's silence in memory of Serge Koussevitzky. Then the orchestra, still standing, played the air from Bach's Suite in D major.

After this, Mr. Freudenthal appeared on the stage, presenting, as an introduction, the Pauesagella from the Swedish opera "The Princess of Cyprus" by Lars Erik Larsson. This is a well-orchestrated, instrumentally compact sequence in a traditional manner, which is nevertheless stimulating in its dynamic effects. Mr. Freudenthal gave the impression of clear purpose in his conducting. His remarkable gifts, however, were only fully revealed later in the programme when he conducted Anton Bruckner's Third Symphony.

The Third Symphony is the first of the more mature works among his nine symphonies. It is dedicated to Wagner, but with the exception of the occasionally very obvious Wagnerian sound, Bruckner is completely independent of his idol, and goes his symphonic way with religious triumph and lyricism. Mr. Freudenthal gave an excellent performance of the work. With certain vibrant accents and tight command, he bent the imposing

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